

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TOKYO 06443 151017Z

14-11
ACTION SS-25

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TO AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY
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S E C R E T TOKYO 6443

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, KS, JA
SUBJ: ROK-JAPAN RELATIONS AFTER KIM CHONG-PIL'S VISIT

REF: TOKYO 6255; TOKYO 6325

SUMMARY: AS A RESULT OF ROK PRIMIN'S VISIT TO TOKYO, JAPAN-
ESE SEEM POISED TO SCHEDULE JOINT MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE.
LACKING IS SMALL GESTURE FROM KOREANS ON KIM DAE-JUNG CASE.
QUESTION IN GOJ MIND MAY BE WHETHER KIM CHONG-PIL WILL BE
ABLE TO PRODUCE. EMBASSY SEOUL'S ASSESSMENT OF KIM'S VIEWS
AND PROSPECTS FOR GESTURE IS INVITED. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING HIS TALKS IN TOKYO MAY 10, ROK PREMIER KIM CHONG-
PIL IMPRESSED THE JAPANESE WITH BOTH HIS PERSONALITY AND
WITH THE ARGUMENT THAT SOME CONCRETE EVIDENCE OF CLOSER
ROK-JAPAN RELATIONS WOULD BE DESIRABLE, PARTICULARLY IN
THE AFTERMATH OF THE COMMUNIST VICTORY IN INDOCHINA.
APPARENTLY TAKEN BY KIM'S LOGIC THAT SUCH A SIGN OF SOLI-
DARITY WOULD HAVE GREATEST IMPACT IF MADE BEFORE PRIMIN
MIKI WENT TO WASHINGTON IN AUGUST, THE JAPANESE LEADERS
CAME AS CLOSE AS THEY YET HAVE TO AGREEING ON A TIME FRAME
FOR THE LONG-POSTPONED ROK-JAPAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE.
TWO THINGS HELD THEM BACK. ONE WAS UNCERTAINTY ABOUT WHEN
THE CURRENT DIET SESSION WILL ACTUALLY END. THE OTHER WAS
THE LACK OF SOME KOREAN GESTURE ON THE KIM DAE-JUNG CASE

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 TOKYO 06443 151017Z

THAT WOULD DEFLATE DOMESTIC CRITICS AND DULL SOME OF THE

RESENTMENT OVER THE KIDNAPPING THAT STILL EXISTS AT MANY LEVELS OF THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING THE VERY TOP.

2. THE JAPANESE WILL DECIDE SOON, PERHAPS AS EARLY AS THE END OF THE WEEK, WHEN THE DIET SESSION IS TO CLOSE. ANY KOREAN GESTURE, OF COURSE, IS UP TO THE ROK, BUT THE ROK PRIMIN ENCOURAGED JAPANESE HOPES. HE ADMITTED TO MIKI THAT KOREA HAD MADE SOME ERRORS IN THE PAST AND HINTED THAT PROGRESS COULD BE MADE BY THE TWO PRIMINS WORKING TOGETHER. AS A RESULT, THE JAPANESE ARE POISED, MORE WILLING TO SCHEDULE A MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE THAN AT ANY TIME SINCE THE KIM ABDUCTION, BUT WAITING FOR SOME SMALL MESSAGE FROM SEOUL.

3. OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT THE JAPANESE BELIEVE KIM CONGPIL, THE ONLY KOREAN LEADER IN WHOM THEY HAVE ANY CONFIDENCE, IS THE KEY TO FINDING A SOLUTION. PRESIDENT PARK IS TOO REMOTE. THEY RETAIN BITTER MEMORIES OF FORMIN KIM DONG-JO'S HANDLING OF THE ASSASSINATION CRISIS LAST FALL, MEMORIES THAT WERE NOT SWEETENED BY HIS VISIT TO TOKYO IN APRIL. AMBASSADOR NISHIYAMA WENT TO SEOUL WITH INSTRUCTIONS TO DEVELOP THE KIND OF CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH KIM CHONG-PIL THAT HIS PREDECESSOR NEVER HAD. FOREIGN OFFICE SOURCES DO NOT BELIEVE THAT HE HAS HAD ENOUGH TIME TO GET CLOSE TO THE ROK PRIMIN, HOWEVER.

4. WE ALSO HAVE THE FEELING THAT THE JAPANESE LEADERSHIP MIGHT BE SATISFIED WITH A LESSER GESTURE ON THE KIM CASE THAN WOULD HAVE BEEN ACCEPTABLE BEFORE THE ROK PRIMIN'S VISIT. NO ONE KNOWS JUST WHAT THE MINIMUM ACCEPTABLE GESTURE MIGHT BE. WE BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT THE JAPANESE WILL NOT SCHEDULE THE CONFERENCE WITHOUT SOME MOVE ON SEOUL'S PART, ALTHOUGH GOJ MIGHT BE UNDERSTANDING OF ROKG NEED TO AVOID APPEARANCE OF QUID PRO QUO. IN ANY EVENT, THIS WOULD SEEM TO BE THE MOMENT FOR TWO SIDES TO MOVE TO BREAK THE DEADLOCK BEFORE TIME AND THE NEW EMERGENCY MEASURES DISSIPATE THE POSITIVE MOOD FOSTERED BY KIM'S VISIT.

5. WE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN THE EXTENT TO WHICH EMBASSY
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PAGE 03 TOKYO 06443 151017Z

SEOUL BELIEVES THAT KIM CHONG-PIL SHARES THE ASSESSMENT OF JAPANESE ATTITUDES SET FORTH IN THIS TELEGRAM. HOW MUCH FLEXIBILITY DOES PRIMIN KIM HAVE IN DEVISING SOME GESTURE ON THE KIM CASE?

6. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO REPEAT TO CINCPAC, HONOLULU HI.
HODGSON

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NNN

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